In the "Proteus" episode, Stephen Dedalus rejects the spatial and temporal enclosure of "Telemachus" and "Nestor" by exposing the conceptual heritage of Western philosophy to a phenomenal Lebenswelt. Alone on the beach at Sandymount, he entertains esoteric speculations about the nature of time, space, and reality. He meditates on Gotthold Lessing's definition of time as nacheinander—things coming "one after another" in a series; and of space as nebeneinander—things set "one beside the other" on a visible plane. In a skeptical study of perception, he cuts through abstruse layers of epistemology with William of Occam's philosophical razor. Stephen returns to the basic sensory data apprehended by the mind and attempts to judge the first principles of human knowing. He is trying to uncover the pre-linguistic roots of art as image and gesture—the primordial, "lived experience" of sight and sound.
Stephen first contemplates the problem of space, which he defines as the “ineluctable modality of the visible” and later clarifies as “what you damn well have to see” (p. 186). “Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies” (p. 37). Stephen has gone back to the original “lived experience in which ‘intuition of space’ as perception and phantasy takes place.” Space is, in effect, “the continuum of the field of vision,” the manner in which objects are given to the mind. The “nothingness” of the intellect must necessarily define itself by directing attention toward the external world. Thought originates “through my eyes,” through the senses that present objects “in person” to consciousness.

If space can be described as the “ineluctable modality of the visible,” then time may similarly be defined as a dimension of auditory perception: “Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsoever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the nacheinander. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible” (p. 37). Like Gotthold Lessing, Stephen has perceived the serial nature of temporality, and he employs the term nacheinander to describe moments following “one after another.” He uses an auditory model from an analysis of sound to get beyond “world time” to the constitution of internal, “immanent” time. Stephen is concerned with the “generative now” at the center of primary time-consciousness. Hence his description of time in ever shorter units, “a very short space of time through very short times of space.” He is trying to abstract the generative instant from “the fixed temporal order . . . of an infinite, two-dimensional series.” Time collapses into the present as a “signature” of eternity—a sign of time-consciousness detached from linear categories.

Stephen’s meditation on the nature of time and space reflects
both the philosophical and the aesthetic distinctions posed by Gotthold Lessing in Laocoön. According to Lessing:

. . . Painting employs wholly different signs or means of imitation from poetry, —the one using forms and colors in space, the other articulate sounds in time. . . .

Objects which exist side by side, or whose parts so exist, are called bodies. Consequently bodies with their visible properties are the peculiar subjects of painting.

Objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other in time, are actions. Consequently actions are the peculiar subjects of poetry.

All bodies, however, exist not only in space, but also in time.

Poetry, unlike the visual arts, communicates itself rhythmically in a temporal medium. In a bit of doggerel verse, Stephen invites “Madeline the mare” to Sandymount. Prior to the jingle, he speaks of “Dominie Deasy”; and the shells, “wild sea money,” recall the schoolmaster’s coins. Stephen’s fragmentary verse is a taunting rejection of Deasy-Nestor and the “nightmare” of history. “Rhythm begins, you see. I hear. A catalectic tetrameter of iambs marching” (p. 37). For the bard, music and poetry become synecdoches for time. Poetic rhythm must be apprehended according to the “ineluctable modality of the audible.”

After an amusing reference to Aristotle, the “master of those who know,” Stephen proceeds to parody theoretical speculation. His eclectic mind plays with the ponderous wisdom of the past and challenges scholastic precepts to empirical reexamination. Philosophy is grist for the mill of art. Homo ludens presides, and a playful creative consciousness pokes fun at the stultified epistemology of Western tradition.

Through the bog of erudite reflections, one can easily miss the humor of “Proteus.” The language of the episode is amorphous, allusive, and elusive, as well. Stephen’s mode of consciousness is extremely ironic. He constantly satirizes his own tendency toward aesthetic solipsism and Berkeleyan self-
enclosure. The Stephen of "Proteus" is the nascent Shem of *Finnegans Wake*, locked in his haunted inkbattlehouse.

Before opening his eyes, Stephen is careful to prolong the "instant" of his reverie. "Open your eyes now. I will. One moment... I will see if I can see." "See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end" (p. 37). He "sees" with his eyes and understands with his intellect the falsity of a Berkeleyan universe. All has not vanished. The world has been "there all the time." The experiment reaffirms the independent existence of things-in-themselves. The poet's task is to read the "signatures of all things"—the phenomena as they appear to him in their *quidditas* or absolute self-givenness.

The young artist criticizes his earlier writings as too romantic and amorphous: "Books you were going to write with letters for titles... Remember your epiphanies on green oval leaves" (p. 40). His sketches were as shapeless as the cloud in *Hamlet*: "Ay, very like a whale" (p. 40), or like anything else. Stephen facetiously describes his epiphanies as "deeply deep." Yet the idea of "epiphany" is precisely what he is trying to grasp in "Proteus." The epiphany or "showing forth" is a momentary illumination analogous to Christ's self-revelation to the magi. Any natural object "intensely regarded" can disclose signatures of meaning to the imagination. When a phenomenal object is brought before the focal point of perception, consciousness reflects back upon itself in a moment of discovery. The mind apprehends the thing perceived in "wholeness," "harmony," and "radiance." "Thought is the thought of thought" (p. 26). The divinity revealed is not that of the traditional Christ, but the transcendent power of man "to be God" by fashioning a new reality from the creative union of consciousness and external object.

"Will you be as gods? Gaze in your omphalos. Hello. Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville. Aleph, alpha: nought, nought one" (p. 38). Despite Stephen's satire of "mystic monks," he too is engaged in "navel-gazing." He is trying to explore the reflective potentials of the intellect and to become his own
“man-God” through the creative possibilities of art. He wants to be put in touch with “Edenville,” but he fears the viscosity of the past. Each man is bound to a trail of navel cords, the “strandentwining cable of all flesh” that leads back to Adam, to paradise, and to original sin. “Spouse and helpmate of Adam Kadmon: Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze. Belly without blemish, bulging big, a buckler of taut vellum, no, whiteheaped corn, orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting. Womb of sin” (p. 38).

Both racial and personal history seemingly constitute an inescapable situation in the world. Stephen thinks with dread of his own consubstantial heritage determined by a moment of “blind rut”: “Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath. They clasped and sun­dered, did the coupler’s will. From before the ages He willed me and now may not will me away or ever. A lex eterna stays about him” (p. 38). Even the Creator is bound by eternal law. He willed the existence of Stephen; and at a particular moment in history, that divine thought had to be realized. The soul was given physical form and cloistered in a stultified world of ludicrous relations. Stephen feels as alien as the mad Swift or the mortified prophet Elisha. “Houses of decay, mine, his and all. . . . Come out of them, Stephen. Beauty is not there” (p. 39).

Stephen’s reflections soon expand to other aspects of paralysis—to religion and to Irish nationality. He ironically contemplates the “Isle of saints,” a land of empty “human shells.” His environment is ominous and deadly, threatening to suck the individual into its bowels and drown him in a sea of lifeless essences. Once again the imagery conveys a nauseous sense of viscosity: “Unwholesome sandflats waited to suck his treading soles, breathing upward sewage breath. He coasted them, walking warily. A porter-bottle stood up, stogged to its waist, in the cakey sand dough. A sentinel: isle of dreadful thirst. Broken hoops on the shore; at the land a maze of dark cunning nets; farther away chalkscrawled backdoors and on
the higher beach a dryingline with two crucified shirts'” (p. 41).

Stephen is treading in a grotesque, surrealistic world, where nature takes on life of its own and waits in ambush for its victim. The slimy sandflats become animate predators, greedy to suck in and destroy consciousness. The land exudes a poisonous stench of asphyxiation. A phallic porter-bottle stands as an omen of castrated manhood; in the “isle of dreadful thirst,” a slimy ooze has supplanted fluidity. The Irish people, half in love with easeful death, are metaphorically sinking down into matter. They have surrendered the possibilities of fluid self-creation to merge with a paralyzed past. A maze of dark cunning nets strangles creativity. Those who do try to escape risk being crucified on a dryingline, as was Little Chandler in the Dubliners story “A Little Cloud.”

Ireland and its sandflats menace Stephen, but he cannot decide on a second exile. He remembers Paris with a sense of dual identity. That “other self” of the Latin Quarter seems to be no more than a fictitious alibi. “Other fellow did it: other me. Hat, tie, overcoat, nose. Lui, c’est moi. You seem to have enjoyed yourself” (p. 41). Stephen tries to believe that “Lui, c’est moi,” but he continues to speak in second-person dialogue to his alter-ego. “You were going to do wonders, what? Missionary to Europe after fiery Columbanus” (p. 42). In Portrait, Stephen figuratively strode across the prostrate body of his mother to fly the nets of tradition. But once in exile, he failed to forge the uncreated conscience of his race. In Paris he found the emasculated remnants of an Irish nation—“rabbit” Patrice and raving Kevin Egan, “loveless, landless, wifeless” (p. 43).

The path of exile is desolate, and Stephen has not yet formed specific plans for escape. Nevertheless, he symbolically chooses rebellion by turning away from the sandflats and mounting a hill of boulders:

He had come nearer the edge of the sea and wet sand slapped his boots... He stood suddenly, his feet beginning to sink slowly in the quaking soil. Turn back.

58
Turning, he scanned the shore south, his feet sinking again slowly in new sockets. The cold domed room of the tower waits. . . . I will not sleep there when this night comes. A shut door of a silent tower entombing their blind bodies, the panthersahib and his pointer. Call: no answer. He lifted his feet up from the suck and turned back by the mole of boulders. Take all, keep all. (P. 44)

The suck of wet sand is pulling Stephen downward, sinking his feet into muddy sockets that impede forward motion. He realizes that he must flee not only the muddy strand but his entire claustrophobic environment. The pull of the sand evokes his earlier terror of asphyxiation. "The cold domed room of the tower waits. Through the barbicans the shafts of light are moving ever, slowly ever as my feet are sinking, creeping duskward over the dial floor. . . . In the darkness of the dome they wait" (p. 44). Stephen will not return to the lair of his enemies, for he recognizes the tower as a tomb that encloses "blind bodies." He must rescue himself from the cakey sand dough and from all the symbols of viscosity that portend annihilation.

The beach speaks a language ""heavy of the past,"" ready to draw willing victims into a Lethean prison. "'These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here. And there, stoneheaps of dead builders, a warren of weasel rats. Hide gold there. Try it. You have some. Sands and stones. Heavy of the past. Sir Lout's toys. Mind you don't get one bang on the ear. I'm the bloody well gigant rolls all them bloody well boulders, bones for my steppingstones'"" (pp. 44-45). The sands have retained a viscous history, a murky tradition of bloodshed, greed, and power, inimical to the artist. Lochlanns and Danevikings haunt these shores: "'Famine, plague, and slaughters. Their blood is in me, their lusts my waves'" (p. 45).

The sight of a drowned dog and the cries of a live one are confounded in the poet's reveries and evoke his earlier fears of death by water. Stephen is jolted into a sudden awareness of the complex guilt hovering at the surface of his mind. He feels powerless to rescue a drowning man or the Irish nation being engulfed by the "'tide flowing quickly in on all sides'" (p. 45).
The dead dog, the drowned corpse, and the ghost of Mary Dedalus have all been overwhelmed by the waters of “bitter death.” The bard protests that he “could not save” his mother by obeying her deathbed commands. Had he yielded to her wishes, he would have been drawn “together down” with her into the ocean’s engulfing waves: “Waters: bitter death: lost” (p. 46).

In “Nestor,” Stephen mimicked himself in the riddle of a “fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush” (p. 27), trying to dispose of a murdered past. Now he identifies with a live dog on the strand, “looking for something lost in a past life. . . . His hindpaws then scattered sand; then his forepaws dabbled and delved. Something he buried there, his grandmother. He rooted in the sand, dabbling, delving . . . vulturing the dead” (pp. 46–47). Like the dog, Stephen feels compelled to dig up the body he buried. He is obsessed with the need to atone for a murder he did not commit, and he must continually revivify the ghost in order to assure himself of exoneration. His mother’s specter merges with the “bloated carcass of a dog” that “lay lolled on bladderwrack.” “Dogskull, dogsniff, eyes on the ground, moves to one great goal. Ah, poor dogsbody. Here lies poor dogsbody’s body” (p. 46). Death becomes the “one great goal” toward which all human history moves. In a negative epiphany, the “dog-god” of the Black Mass manifests itself as a putrid, inedible Eucharist. A drowned dog lies decaying on the beach, a ludicrous symbol of Nietzsche’s murdered deity and a gruesome image of matter devoid of spirit. Mulligan’s epithet, “poor dogsbody,” has materialized in a grotesque sea carcass, a warning to the poet of the fate that awaits him in Ireland.

The “manifestation of dog” is a revelation of death as the temporal end of life, the ironic culmination of Deasy’s linear model of history. But the epiphany of dog and panther simultaneously issues a call to meaning—a call to escape from the nightmare of history into the prolific possibilities of dream: “After he woke me up last night same dream or was it? Wait. Open hallway. Street of harlots. Remember. Haroun al Ras-
child. I am almosting it. That man led me, spoke. I was not afraid. The melon he had he held against my face. Smiled: creamfruit smell. That was the rule, said. In. Come. Red carpet spread. You will see who” (p. 47). Stephen turns his attention to the prophesies of an unconscious night world. He imagines an illicit encounter with oriental adventure and with a dark stranger who bears the gift of fruitful creation. The dream serves as an uncanny premonition of his future meeting with Leopold Bloom. The older man will introduce Stephen to the “melonsmellonous” hemispheres of Gea-Tellus and to the fertile seeds of human relationship, through which the flesh can become word.

At present, Stephen balances the lascivious gaiety of “The Rogue’s Delight” against somber “monkwords” that condemn sins of “morose delectation” (p. 47). After a dream calling him to life, he writes a poem about bloodsucking vampires and the kiss of death. He continues to feel alienated from that “man-shape ineluctable” which binds him to the physical world. “His shadow lay over the rocks as he bent, ending. Why not endless till the farthest star? Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta of Cassiopeia, worlds. Me sits there with his augur’s rod of ash, in borrowed sandals, by day beside a livid sea, unhelped, in violet night walking beneath a reign of uncouth stars. I throw this ended shadow from me, man-shape ineluctable, call it back. Endless, would it be mine, form of my form?” (p. 48).

Stephen never responds to the last question, but his answer is implicit. He has already distinguished between the “I” and the “me”—between a conscious, first-person ego and a physically detached first-person object. “Me” becomes a separate, corporeal self, sitting on a rock “with his augur’s rod of ash.” The subjective “I” throws forth a finite shadow from the “me,” a “darkness shining in the brightness,” created by the material deflection of light. Could Stephen project his shadow “endless till the farthest star,” he would become a disembodied spirit. He would relinquish his concrete existence as a “being in the world” and forfeit personal identity. The shadow-self reminds
Stephen of the darkness endemic to the soul—the "shame-wound" of original sin that shackles the intellect to a dying animal. But the shadow also affirms a physical presence that can be touched by other human beings and can establish contact with kindred spirits, whose comforting solicitude may reveal the "word known to all men" (p. 49). "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now. . . . I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me" (p. 49). Stephen is isolated and despondent because he cannot yet utter the word of love rooted in the flesh.

As noon approaches, Stephen's shadow grows thinner, and he is momentarily arrested by a blinding light. "I am caught in this burning scene. Pan's hour, the faunal noon. Among gumheavy serpentplants, milkoozing fruits, where on the tawny waters leaves lie wide. Pain is far" (p. 49). The goat-god Pan lulls the bard into a temporary lotus-land of viscous, lethargic ease. Stephen's language is sensuous and highly lyrical. He feels himself sinking into the warm sensuality of Lethean repose. But unlike Leopold Bloom, he is loath to submit to the somnolence of lotus-gazing. Emulating the prudent Ulysses, he overcomes a seductive temptation to lose himself in an embryonic environment and to return to that "great sweet Mother/Mother and lover of men, the sea."

Stephen remains on shore, a safe distance from the ocean. He turns from midday slumber to the "masculine" act of urination. In making water, he creates an artistic "wavespeech," a "flower unfurling" that declines to mingle with the ocean: "Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, ooos. Vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded in barrels. And, spent, its speech ceases. It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling" (p. 49).

For Stephen, micturition is analogous to poetic creation. It gives rise to the most lyrical passage in "Proteus," and it undergoes such extravagant cerebration that the physical act is barely recognizable: "Under the upswelling tide he saw the writhing weeds lift languidly and sway reluctant arms, hising up their petticoats, in whispering water swaying and upturning.
coy silver fronds. . . . To no end gathered: vainly then released, forth flowing, wending back: loom of the moon. Weary too in sight of lovers, lascivious men, a naked woman shining in her courts, she draws a toil of waters” (pp. 49–50). Stephen depicts the “writhing weeds” as female temptresses, barren, and “womb weary.” The infertile womb of the siren awaits its fullness, but gathers it placental tissues “to no end.” Its menses are “vainly then released, forth flowing, wending back: loom of the moon.”

Earlier in “Proteus,” Stephen associated the moon-drawn tide with the feminine menstrual cycle: “Tides, myriad-islanded, within her, blood not mine, oinopa ponon, a wine-dark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death” (pp. 47–48). He now portrays the moon-driven sea as a cunning succubus. The ocean is “mother of all men,” anxious to devour her sons and snuff out their independence. A giant female demon, she threatens to murder and castrate those who yield to her power: “Five fathoms out there. Full fathom five thy father lies. At one he said. Found drowned. High water at Dublin bar. Driving before it a loose drift of rubble, fanshoals of fishes, silly shells. A corpse rising saltwhite from the undertow, bobbing landward. . . . There he is. Hook it quick. Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor” (p. 50). Stephen’s terror of the sea projects itself into the drowned corpse, and his quote from The Tempest symbolically identifies the dead man with Simon Dedalus, the bard’s “consubstantial” father. Simon has been emasculated by maternal Ireland, by Mother Church, and by his dead wife Mary. Like the corpse fished out of the sea, he no longer drives before him an erect phallus. He is enslaved to the “loose drift of rubble” in Dublin society, to his wife’s “old feather fans,” and to the “silly shells” of a dead tradition.

Stephen contemplates the corpse in terms of metaphorical castration:

Bag of corpsegas sopping in foul brine. A quiver of minnows, fat of a spongy titbit, flash through the slits of his buttoned trouserfly. God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes
featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead
dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead. Hauled stark over the
gunwhale he breathes upward the stench of his green grave, his
leprous nosehole snoring to the sun.

A seachange this, brown eyes saltblue. Seadeath, mildest of all
deaths known to man. Old Father Ocean. . . . Just you give it a
fair trial. We enjoyed ourselves immensely. (P. 50)

The man "found drowned" has merged with the "great sweet
mother," forfeiting his masculinity. His genitals are "a spongy
titbit" for a quiver of minnows, and he himself is an object to be
devoured by fishes. Once a "god" in his freedom, the drowned
man has been reduced to lifeless rubble.

When Stephen identifies his father with the corpse, he is
acting out an Oedipal impulse toward partricide. He sees his
progenitor dissolving in a claustrophobic environment. But
once drowned, his father joins the forces of destruction and
becomes an agent of castration. For the first time in Ulysses,
the sea is depicted as masculine. "Old Father Ocean" beckons
the poet to a luscious "seadeath." "Just you give it a fair trial,"
the corpse expostulates. "We enjoyed ourselves immensely" (p. 50).

Echoing Christ’s words on the cross, Stephen turns away
from the suicidal temptation and asks for water in the form of
drink: "Come. I thirst. Clouding over. No black clouds any-
where, are there? Thunderstorm. Allbright he falls, proud
lightning of the intellect, Lucifer . . . No. My cockle hat and
staff and his my sandal shoon. Where? To evening lands. . . .
Yes, evening will find itself in me, without me" (p. 50).

Stephen refuses to merge with the rising tide, just as he would
not rest in the lethargy of "faunal noon." He overcomes the se-
ductions of Lucifer, the "light-bearer," by renouncing "proud
lightning of the intellect" for the darker, more profound areas
of consciousness. "God becomes man becomes fish becomes
barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain." And since the
process must be reversible, man may become a Nietzschean
divinity by exploring his own mental and volitional powers.
The mind’s shadow is "the darkness shining in brightness" that
constitutes itself through the luminous objects it beholds.
Throughout the "Proteus" episode, Stephen drifts on the tides of language and allows thought to "think itself." His prose celebrates the capaciousness of the human mind and the protean possibilities of free association. Consciousness is godlike in its negativity: it embraces and transforms the whole of literary and philosophical tradition; it perceives, reshapes, and interprets present reality. Once the mind stands open to the phenomenal world, the artist can utter the word known to all men, the primordial "yes" that affirms being and makes creation possible.

As the "Proteus" episode concludes, "toothless Kinch," the "superman" (p. 22), becomes the Christ of a new religion, that of artistic postcreation. Alone, micturating on a rock, Stephen makes water in a symbolic, lyrical stream that will eventually buoy him up above the grasp of "old Father Ocean." Searching for the obscure truths of being, he will safely float on top of the void, brandishing the "crosstrees" of post-Christian belief: "He turned his face over a shoulder, rere regardant. Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship" (p. 51). In "silence, exile, and cunning," Stephen Dedalus moves "homeward" toward the self-proclaimed divinity of an artist-God.

In the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, Stephen defends and elucidates his hypothesis of artistic postcreation. He offers an aesthetic theory that steers an ingenious course between Plato and Aristotle, between A. E.'s theosophy and Mulligan's materialism.

George Russell insists that "art has to reveal to us ideas, formless spiritual essences" that embody "Plato's world of ideas" (p. 185). In the Platonic Trinity of "Father, Word, and Holy Breath," Jesus Christ becomes "magician of the beautiful, the Logos who suffers in us at every moment" (p. 185). Theosophy implies the immanence of a word longing to be spoken.

Armed with his lessons from "Proteus," Stephen tries to
connect the Logos with life. He believes that art gives voice to the pain of bereavement: suffering constitutes the genesis of lyrical expression. "The life esoteric is not for ordinary person" (p. 185). Nor is it for the artist, whose peripatetic musings cling to the rinds of "this vegetable world." "Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (p. 186).

Aristotle's "dagger definitions" and the schoolmen's universal categories both give way to the evidence of phenomenal experience: "Horseness is the whatness of allhorse. Streams of tendency and eons they worship. God: noise in the street: very peripatetic. Space: what you damn well have to see" (p. 186). The theosophical whirlpool offers a ludicrous perdition: "Through spaces smaller than red globules of man's blood they creepycrawl after Blake's buttocks into eternity of which this vegetable world is but a shadow" (p. 186). By eulogizing idyllic notions of peasant life and by clutching to "H. P. B.'s elemental," George Russell and his mystical band lose all sense of judgment and discrimination: "This verily is that. I am the fire upon the altar. I am the sacrificial butter" (p. 185). "The faithful hermetists await the light, ripe for chelaship, ringround-about him... Gulfer of souls, engulfer. Hesouls, shesouls, shoals of souls. Engulfed with wailing creecries, whirled, whirling, they bewail" (pp. 191-92).

Because Stephen eschews the threat of intellectual engulfment, he has already faded into social impalpability among the Dublin literati. He is not invited to an evening party at George Moore's. He is unwelcome at the "Yogibogeybox in Dawson chambers" (p. 191). And he has not been asked to contribute to A. E.'s edition of *New Songs*, which Lyster presently announces: "Mr. Russell, rumour has it, is gathering together a sheaf of our younger poets' verses" (p. 192). Stephen feels like an alien among the Irish intelligentsia. The other men agree that Colum "has that queer thing, genius," and they speculate that "our national epic has yet to be written... Moore is the man for it. A knight of the rueful countenance" (p. 192). They all praise James Stephens for "doing some clever sketches." But Stephen Dedalus is deliberately excluded from the list of
those who "are becoming important, it seems" (p. 192). Alone, he identifies with the tragic figure of Cordelia and with her Celtic analogue, "Lir's loneliest daughter" (p. 192). "Cordoglio," he thinks—deepest sorrow.

"Necessity is that in virtue of which it is impossible that one can be otherwise" (p. 192). And only through art can the poet challenge historical necessity. "Here he ponders things that were not: what Caesar would have lived to do had he believed the soothsayer: what might have been: possibilities of the possible as possible: things not known" (p. 193). Stephen, Shakespeare, and Leopold Bloom all find refuge from grief and alienation in the infinite "possibilities" of the artistic imagination.

In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen cloaks his personal isolation in the biographical mask of Shakespeare, his dialectical opposite. The French triangle that haunts the Renaissance poet is at all points removed from Stephen's own experience. It signifies traumatic collision with a world of "interindividual" relations, the emotional source of pity, terror, and joy. "That lies in space which I in time must come to ineluctably" (p. 217). In time, Stephen will come through space to the figure of Leopold Bloom, whose life situation inadvertently replicates the figurative wound of Shakespeare's adolescence. Bloom will create from his own life miniature "works of art," compassionate stories that spring from imaginative sympathy. He will serve as a model of negative capability for the young artist who has yet to be tempered by the fires of worldly experience.

Caught between the "Saxon smile and yankee yawp" he faces in "Scylla," Stephen insists that "Hamlet is a ghoststory" (p. 187). "What is a ghost? . . . One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners. Elizabethan London lay as far from Stratford as corrupt Paris lies from virgin Dublin" (p. 188). Like Shakespeare, Stephen is a ghost who returns from the limbo of Paris to a Dublin world that has forgotten him—or perhaps that he, in his coming exile, willfully chooses to forget. He foresees his flight from the virgin city as necessary to future creation. Only through the deflowering of his own innocence can the poet aspire
to intellectual fertility. As a “ghost” of Dublin through absence, Stephen will become father-creator to the phantom children he engenders in the world of art.

Under “everchanging forms,” Stephen maintains his personal identity through a continuous memory that shelters remnants of the past: “But I, entelechy, form of forms, am I by memory,” he says. “Molecules all change. I am other I now” (p. 189). Yet he is still the same young man who “sinned and prayed and fasted” at Clongowes Wood school. By accepting responsibility for his debt to A. E., Stephen confirms his identity as bearer of the word. He chooses between “I, I” and “I. I.” (p. 190). One arrangement suggests the continuity of the transcendental ego that Stephen acknowledges as his subjective self. The other asserts the “pastness” of that ghost-self that has become “not I” by virtue of its impalpability. Stephen’s paradigm “A. E. I. O. U.” affirms the existence of a continuous ego and proclaims it guardian of the Logos, bringer of the vowel sounds that structure human language. Although Stephen may wish to discard his earlier resemblance to lapwing Icarus, he defends both himself and Shakespeare when he declares: “A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery” (p. 190).

Shakespeare, a “ghost by absence” (p. 189), exults in the ghost children he produces in his dramas. Prince Hamlet replaces Hamnet, the son who died at eleven years of age; and Ann becomes the “guilty queen” Gertrude. So “does the artist weave and unweave his image. And . . . so through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth” (p. 194). The artist, who is a “weaver of the wind,” sews his image throughout lyrical tapestries informed by a multitude of personal experiences. He creates worlds from words, microcosms inhabited by aesthetic offspring who reflect their parent immortally. “His own image to a man with that queer thing genius is the standard of all experience, material and moral. . . . The images of other males of his blood will repel him. He will see in them grotesque attempts of nature to foretell or repeat himself” (pp. 195–96). The dramatist gives form to the myth
and mystery of consciousness. In his plays, he regenerates himself in the character of a ghost-son, a persona conceived by the union of imagination and experience. "He is in my father. I am in his son" (p. 194).

The theme of paternity pervades the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, and the almighty Father of Catholicism is present everywhere in the mode of absence. "A father, Stephen said, battling against hopelessness, is a necessary evil. . . . Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. . . . Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?" (p. 207). Paternity, like the whirlpool Charybdis, is founded "upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood" (p. 207). It is a romantic notion unsubstantiated by the rock-like, "Scyllan" proof of physical motherhood. The artist who is insecure in his sexuality retreats into the isolation of spiritual paternity. As androgynous god of his own creation, he becomes father and mother to the fictional daughter-sons that reflect internal images of himself.

"If Socrates leave his house today he will find the sage seated on his doorstep. If Judas go forth tonight it is to Judas his steps will tend. Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves" (p. 213). Following the pornosophical tradition of Frank Harris, Stephen "meets himself" in the character of William Shakespeare. The theory that he proposes is itself a new "work of art," a pseudo-biographical rendering of the impetus of genius. Stephen fashions Shakespeare in the image of aestheticism and post-Victorian sexuality. He projects his own self-doubt onto the Renaissance artist, whose work he attributes to the pangs of erotic betrayal: "There is, I feel in the words, some goad of the flesh driving him into a new passion, a darker shadow of the first, darkening even his own understanding of himself. A like fate awaits him and the two rages commingle in a
Stephen mourns the poet's loss of self-confidence, that positive image of virility "untimely killed" by the seductress Ann Hathaway. Ann "hath a way" into the hay with any lovers that would. If Ann could seduce Will, she might take other lovers after marriage. She wields "woman's invisible weapon" and can tempt men to hidden sexual pleasures. Fornication planted in Shakespeare's mind the initial seeds of conjugal mistrust. As Stephen observes, "a man who holds so tightly to what he calls his rights over what he calls his debts will hold tightly also to what he calls his rights over her whom he calls his wife" (pp. 205-6).

Agenbite of Inwit was born in a ryefield when Will cried his first "O!" of orgasmic rejoicing: "He was overborne in a cornfield first (ryefield, I should say) and he will never be a victor in his own eyes after nor play victoriously the game of laugh and lie down. Assumed dongiovanism will not save him. No later undoing will undo the first undoing. The tusk of the boar has wounded him there where love lies a-bleeding" (p. 196). "Re Joyce," the cry of doubt continued as the birth pangs of the artist. The ravished Shakespeare piled up creations "to hide himself from himself, an old dog licking an old sore. But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed" (p. 197). To quote Molly Bloom's malapropism, the "omissions" in a poet's life give rise to the "emissions" of his imagination. Creation provides orgasmic release in a process analogous to mental onanism.

Like Mallarmé's Hamlet, Stephen's Shakespeare is an "absent-minded beggar": "il se promène, lisant au livre de lui-même" (p. 187). Only through art can the madman give form to the chaos of a wounded psyche. Shakespeare expresses his anger at Ann's supposed infidelity by channeling violence into dramatic conflict. Like Leopold Bloom, he kills his enemies in his head. His art is a constant attempt to gain control over psychological and emotional turbulence.
Stephen's Shakespeare has known betrayal by everyone close to him: not only by wife, but by father, son, brothers, and homosexual lover. His belief in a Renaissance world order, with the family at its center, has been traumatically shattered. He can no longer maintain faith in a rational universe hierarchically structured by an omniscient deity. The Catholic Father-God has proved himself a "chewer of corpses," devouring in blood sacrifice the poet's young son. With the loss of Hamnet, Shakespeare was forced to relinquish the illusory hope of tribal immortality contingent on a male heir. To perpetuate his image, he had to give birth to fictional progeny who would spring, fully grown, from his own imagination. When the God-creator failed, the artist himself had to assume the responsibilities of a creator-God.

Through this elaborate interpretive biography, Stephen is groping for a new definition of the artist as hero. The modern poet must arise, Christ-like, from the phoenix flames of suffering. Stephen's theory implies that the artist is set apart from society by his discovery of primordial alienation. He perceives the self as "other," the pathetic butt of a metaphysical jest. Thrown into a world that makes little teleological sense, he responds by detaching himself from absurdity and participating in cosmic laughter. He can reify his apprehension of the universe only by creating a fictional microcosm ex nihilo in the present. The poet reconstitutes experience in terms of unique and unprecedented perception. Because loss has stripped him of traditional assumptions, he becomes an anarchist and a maverick. He is free to transcend the a priori categories that restrict the vision of common men, and he defies both society and history in a quest for psychological liberation.

According to Stephen, the life of Shakespeare must be interpreted as paradigmatic. Betrayal by a Father-God and by a mother-wife wrenches the artist free from traditional roles. He recognizes that human existence is totally "rootless." And in his isolation, he is forced to become wife and mother, "all in all," unto himself. His fertile consciousness has been impregnated by a fresh encounter with experience: the god "Bring-
forth” speaks and gives birth to a secondary world, a new aesthetic universe.

The poet’s loss in the game of life is his gain in terms of imaginative expression. He knows that “one life is all” (p. 202) he has for the multiplication of joy and sorrow, of sensuous and emotional experience. Haunted by the specter of mortality, he desperately attempts to propagate eternal images of himself that fulfill the infinite possibilities of consciousness. “He is the ghost and the prince. He is all in all” (p. 212). Shakespeare “was and felt himself the father of all his race” (p. 208).

—Himself his own father, Sonmulligan told himself. Wait. I am big with child. I have an unborn child in my brain. Pallas Athena! A play! The play’s the thing! Let me parturiate! (P. 208)

“Mr. Mulligan . . . has his theory too of the play and of Shakespeare. All sides of life should be represented” (p. 198). Mulligan, the mocker, offers a ludicrous parody of hermaphroditic creation. The “pseudomalachi” characteristically preaches a gospel of egotistical self-indulgence. He suggests that the process of aesthetic conception involves nothing more than a solipsistic projection of the ego onto fictional characters. In a mock drama of parthenogenesis, he gives birth to a juvenile, masturbatory fantasy:

Everyman His own Wife
or
A Honeymoon in the Hand
(a national immorality in three orgasms)
(P. 216)

The play, a bawdy perversion of Shakespearean drama, only serves to heighten the impact of Stephen’s aesthetic theory. “After God Shakespeare has created most” (p. 212). But no matter how hard the artist tries to be “all in all” to himself and his creations, he can never compensate for the primal treachery of a God that failed. And so he continues to create worlds. He will utter the “word known to all men,” the Logos become
flesh through poetry and drama. The word that he speaks is the Fiat of the Creator: he proclaims, simply, "Let it be." And through the acquiescence of fictional characters, his mandate will be executed. Like the Miltonic Adam, the poet creates through the original act of "naming" a universe.⁶ "He acts and is acted on" (p. 212).

If life is a game that man must invariably lose, then his only recourse is to enjoy the game in process, or to assert the validity and the permanence of the games that he devises through the magic of art. Let those who will play. As Joyce would tell us, "I know it is no more than a game, but it is a game that I have learned to play in my own way. Children may just as well play as not. The ogre will come in any case."

In "Scylla and Charybdis," Stephen Dedalus constructs an elaborate theory of art as psychological compensation. The "poetic word" will allow him to transcend the authority of all the patriarchs who have failed, from the Father-God of Catholicism to the alcoholic progenitor who trudges through Ulysses with sentimental gait. In order to give birth to himself as an artist, the writer must first slay the ghosts of his consubstantial parents. Through the agency of Leopold Bloom, Stephen will discover a new, solicitous, non-threatening paternity. He will be introduced to the "world of men" from which poetic wavespeech—lyric, epic, and dramatic—can at last be fashioned.

_Laud we the gods_
_And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils_
_From our bless’d altars._

(P. 218)

By the end of the episode, the artist becomes god of his own creation. There are few traditional deities left for us to praise.

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1. "Essentia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate." Stephen recalls Occam a few moments later in another context: "Dan Occam . . . invincible doctor" (p. 40). See Gifford and Seidman, _Notes for Joyce_, p. 36.
2. Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, pp. 23–24. As Husserl explains: "Consciousness of space belongs in the sphere of phenomenological givens, i.e., the consciousness of space is the lived experience in which 'intuition of space' as perception and phantasy takes place. . . . If we abstract all transcendental interpretation and reduce perceptual appearance to the primary given content, the latter yields the continuum of the field of vision . . ." (ibid.).

3. According to Sartre, the only valid kind of knowledge is "intuitive," "the presence of the thing (Sache) 'in person' to consciousness" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 172).

4. Husserl, *Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 29. Like Stephen Dedalus and Gotthold Lessing, Husserl is concerned with "the apprehensions of time, the lived experiences in which the temporal in the Objective sense appears" (p. 24). He, too, bases his investigation on an analysis of sound "purely as a hyletic datum" (p. 44); and he compares time to a melody or tonal process held in retention by consciousness.


6. In *Finnegans Wake*, the microcosm of the artist is totally dependent upon the "word" that he utters. Word and world, Logos and realization are contiguous. The writer reveals the mystery of himself through the furniture of language: the cosmos he fashions is a unique "night world," an amalgamation of dream and neologism.